Drink driving developments in Northern Ireland

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Together protecting and improving the environment
Part 1:
General road safety developments and plans
Fatalities on Northern Ireland’s roads

![Bar chart showing the number of fatalities on Northern Ireland’s roads from 1971 to 2012. The chart indicates a downward trend over the years.]
Road deaths per million population
The NI Road Safety Strategy to 2020

• Vision – ‘to make a journey on Northern Ireland’s roads as safe for all road users as anywhere in the world’
• Published 2011 after NI Executive Committee approval
• 199 action measures
Road fatalities by year

![Graph showing the number of road fatalities by year from 2004 to 2011. The graph shows a decreasing trend in fatalities, with a sharp drop in 2009. The 2004-2008 baseline is indicated, as well as the 2020 target for fatalities.]
Seriously injured by year

Number

Year

2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011

2004-2008 Baseline

Serious Injuries

2020 Target
0-15 year old KSIs

- 2004-2008 Baseline
- Child KSIs
- 2020 Target

Year:
- 2004
- 2005
- 2006
- 2007
- 2008
- 2009
- 2010
- 2011

Number:
- 0
- 20
- 40
- 60
- 80
- 100
- 120
- 140
- 160
16-24 year KSIs

2004-2008 Baseline

Young Adult KSIs

2020 Target

Year

2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011

Number

0 50 100 150 200 250 300 350 400 450
Completed measures

- Introduction of overhauled Goods Vehicle Operator licensing
- Introduction of taxi operator licensing
- Development of a research programme – and publishing research on older road users
- Implementing requirements of 3rd EU Driving Licence Directive
- Changes to the driving test
- Reviewing the Road Safety Educational Service
Progress

• HGV compliance rates increased from <50% to 70%
• Seat belt wearing now above UK average (98% - from 82% in 1994)
• MOT compliance now in line with UK average (96% - from 72% in 2002)
Work in hand (1)

- Graduated Driver Licensing, including
  - 12 month minimum mandatory learning period
  - Provisional licence at 16.5
  - Driving on a Motorway as Learner (under supervision)
  - National speed limits to apply when learning
  - 2 year novice driver period (replaces 12 month R period)
  - Passenger restrictions for 6 months for 24 and under (14-20 year old passengers)
Work in hand (2)

- Mutual Recognition of Penalty Points N-S
- Helmet wearing on quad bikes
- Revamped road safety education service
- Cross-government working eg. Safety centres
- Fundamental reform of taxi regulation
- Learning to Drive agenda
- Review of Cycling Proficiency Scheme
Road Safety Campaigns (1)

• We have developed, with a strong evidence based, a range of campaigns
• A number of these are (deliberately) hard hitting

• Video
Part 2: 
Drink driving proposals
The current position

- Limit set at 80 mg/100 ml
- Preliminary test at scene and then evidential test
- Mandatory disqualification with mandatory retest
- Courses for Drink Drive Offenders an available sentencing option with 25% reduction of disqualification period
The results – in 2011

- Drink driving the most common single cause of fatal and serious collisions and casualties, resulted in 9 fatalities (15%) and 87 serious injuries (10.5%)
- 42.7% of these casualties were aged 16–24
- Most common single cause of driver KSIs (14.8%)
- 44,521 PBTs carried out, 3,347 positive
- 2,902 convictions, 1,329 referrals to CDDO (46%) and 747 take up (56% of referrals; 26% of convictions)
Consider that . . .

- Estimated that with reduction to 50mg *alone*, at least one life would be saved and 13 serious injuries prevented each year in Northern Ireland.
- Up to 3 years later, the reconviction rate of those not completing NI’s current drink drive course is 2.3 times higher and up to 8½ years later is 1.6 times higher than those who do.
Recent history

• Policy direction by previous DOE Minister to investigate lowering the limit and taking other action to reduce drink drive casualties
• Public consultation in 2009 – key results
  • Public Support
  • Political Support
• Ministerial commitment to legislation, with pre-legislative consultation
Legislative proposals (1)

- Limit of 50 mg/100 ml
- Lower limit of 20 mg/100 ml for professional, novice and learner drivers - recognises higher risk with inexperienced and young drivers and the greater responsibility borne by professional drivers
- Mandatory road side testing
- Move to evidential test at roadside
Legislative proposals (2)

• Removal of ‘Statutory Option’ - the right in certain circumstances, to ask for a blood or urine sample to replace a breath test sample
• Points and fine (but not automatic ban) for new offences under 80 mg
• Automatic referral of offenders onto an approved drink drive rehabilitation scheme
• Repeat offenders – 2 proposals (graduated scheme, or 3 year ban for all second offenders)
Policy proposals

• Two additional policy issues –
  (i) extending the role of registered health care professionals; and
  (ii) Removing the need for preliminary breath testing when roadside evidential equipment is available
Responses to the consultation

• Closed 5 October; currently analysing responses
• General support for new lower BAC limits and graduated penalties
• No clear picture emerging on penalties for repeat offenders – need to explore further
• Legal and ethical issues on extending role of Health Care Professionals – need to explore further
• No major issues on removing preliminary test as prerequisite to evidential test when roadside evidential equipment is available
The way forward from here

- Road Traffic Amendment Bill No 1
  - Drink driving
  - GDL
  - Crash helmets on quad bikes
- Introduce to Assembly, December 2012
- Royal Assent 2013
- Roll out – likely to be staged and pragmatic, eg:
  1. Mandatory Testing
  2. Lower Limit 50
  3. Lower Limit 20
Road Safety Campaigns (2)

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Summary
Conclusions

• Northern Ireland has come a long way….
• …and has further ambitions – vision zero
• Minister sees regulation as often a good thing, as is being radical and bold
• Amended drink driving legislation expected to be made in 2013